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# What Shall I Feed My Baby?

A Month-by-Month Guide

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## How To Use This Guide

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This guide is for you and your new baby. It will help you to:

- Find out some important facts on breastfeeding.
- Learn how to prepare infant formula and how to make your own baby food.
- Follow each step of your baby's growth and development.
- Discover how to tell when your baby is ready to drink from a cup and eat from a spoon.
- Record all of the special events of your baby's first year.

Start the guide with your baby's birthday. Fill in the name of the month at the top of the page, and enter the dates in the blocks for

each day. Then, when you record an appointment or event, you can place it on the correct month and day.

Each month you may record the following information about your baby:

- weight and measurements
- immunizations
- medical appointments
- when you start feeding each new food

example: recognizing the breast or bottle as a source of food, sucking foods from the spoon, or grasping objects and bringing them to his or her mouth. Every infant is an individual and will develop feeding skills at different rates. Your baby may develop these skills at different ages than those mentioned in this guide. This is usually perfectly normal. Talk with your doctor if you have any questions.

• when your baby masters a new feeding skill—for

The main idea to remember is that all infants will go through these feeding stages. It is your job to watch for clues that will tell you when your infant is ready for the next stage.

**Read all of the messages in this guide when you first receive it.** Most of the information is important to know before you start feeding your baby.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has two programs that provide pregnant women,

women with infants, infants, and young children with foods they need for good health and with counseling about nutrition and health. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and

the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provide foods with nutrients such as proteins, vitamins, and minerals to help you stay healthy and to help your baby develop. When you are enrolled in one of the programs, you will get some of the foods you need throughout your pregnancy and after your baby's birth. When your baby is enrolled in one of the programs, he or she will also get food.

### Should You Breastfeed Your Baby?

Only you can decide whether you want to nurse your baby. Breastfeeding is a natural and satisfying way to feed your baby. Why not try it? You may have many questions about the time it will take and how you can fit it into your daily schedule, or how your other children will feel about it. Discuss these questions with your doctor, nurse, or nutritionist. They can help.

### Here are some reasons why you may want to breastfeed:

- Your milk is ready when your baby wants to eat. It's clean and at the right temperature.
- Your milk is made to meet your baby's need for nutrients.
- Your milk contains substances that may prevent digestive problems such as diarrhea.
- Breastfed infants are less likely to develop allergies.
- Breastfeeding can bring physical enjoyment to you and your baby. The closeness between a mother and baby when feeding helps to build a loving relationship. When you breastfeed, you should relax, hold your baby close, and enjoy.



## **What Should You Eat When You Nurse Your Baby?**

How well your baby grows depends on how good your milk supply is. To have a good milk supply:

- You should drink a lot of liquids—2 to 3 quarts a day, including plenty of water.
- You should drink four glasses of milk a day as part of your liquid requirement or eat other high calcium foods like cheese; yogurt; dark, leafy vegetables; and tofu (soybean curd).

• You will need to eat a little more (about 500 calories) when you are nursing.

Get the extra calories from nutritious foods like breads, cereals, fruits, vegetables, meat, and milk.

• Many foods that are high in fat and sugar provide calories without providing needed nutrients like protein, vitamins, and minerals.

You should limit the amount of these foods that you eat.

**Every day you need:**

- Four or more servings from the Vegetable/Fruit Group, such as bananas, broccoli, cantaloupe, car-

rots, oranges and orange juice, peaches, potatoes, spinach/greens, and tomatoes.

- Four or more servings from the Bread and Cereal Group, such as rice, iron-fortified cereal, tortillas, and whole wheat bread.

- Four servings from the Milk Group, such as cheese, milk, and yogurt.
- Two or more servings from the Meat, Fish, Poultry, and Beans Group, such as chicken, dried beans, dried peas, eggs, fish, lean beef, lean pork, and peanuts.

Go easy on fats and sweets.

## Tips on Breastfeeding

If you decide to nurse your baby, here are a few tips to remember:

- Babies can be nursed as soon as they are born. Their sucking is necessary to bring in your milk. The first few days your milk may come in slowly, but your baby's sucking will bring in a good supply.
- Your early milk is called colostrum. It is especially important for your baby to get this milk. It is rich in nutrients and contains substances that help your baby resist infections.

- Your doctor may prescribe additional supplements like vitamin D, fluoride, and iron if he or she feels they are necessary.

You may want to discuss this with your doctor.

- When you start to nurse, hold your baby close so that the baby's cheek touches your breast. The baby will turn toward you and open his or her mouth. Guide your breast so that your baby's mouth takes your nipple and as much of the dark area (areola) as possible.

- Milk will flow when the baby sucks and his or her jaw presses against your breast.

- Make sure your baby can breathe easily while breast-feeding. You may need to use your finger to push your breast away from the baby's nose.

- Put your little finger in the corner of your baby's mouth when the baby has finished feeding to gently break the suction.

- Feed your baby when he or she is hungry. A baby may be hungry as often as every 2 to 4 hours, because breastmilk is digested more

- quickly than infant formula. know to start with that breast at the next feeding.
- Nurse on each breast for 3 to 5 minutes at each feeding the first day. Gradually increase to 10 minutes the second day and 15 minutes by the third day.
  - Both breasts should be used at each feeding.
  - Begin the next feeding at the breast that was nursed last because your baby only partially emptied this breast at the previous feeding. To help your memory, pin a safety pin to your bra covering the breast your baby nursed last so you will

- that will let you nurse your baby at any time during the day or night.
- You wear clothes that button down the front or loose pullovers when you are breastfeeding.
  - You wear disposable nursing pads or use tissues inside your bra, as you may leak some milk.
  - You ask the nurse or nutritionist how to remove milk from your breast by hand or how to use a breast pump. If you work or go to school, you may also want to ask how to store your milk.

### Making Breastfeeding Easier

You may find it easier to breastfeed if:

- You go to a hospital where your baby stays in the room with you, or one

## Bottle Feeding

If you prefer to bottle feed your baby, there are a number of iron-fortified infant formulas available. These formulas are a substitute for breast milk. See page 48 for instructions on preparing formula.

- Since babies are individuals, their needs vary. Here are some suggestions for bottle feeding your baby:
- Start with 2 to 3 ounces of formula at each feeding. Most babies will take this much at each feeding the first few days.
  - After your baby empties the bottle completely for

two or three feedings, add one-half ounce more of formula to the bottle for the next feeding. The amount of formula your baby needs depends on age, size, amount of activity, and how rapidly the baby is growing.

- Don't worry about how much your baby takes at a single feeding. Most babies will have times when they just aren't hungry and other times when they eat more than you expect.
- Your baby will let you know when he or she is full and is no longer interested in feeding. Encouraging babies to drink more than they want can make them gain too much weight.

- Your doctor, nurse, or nutritionist will help you



decide how much formula to give as your baby grows.

- When you prepare formula, be sure that everything is clean.

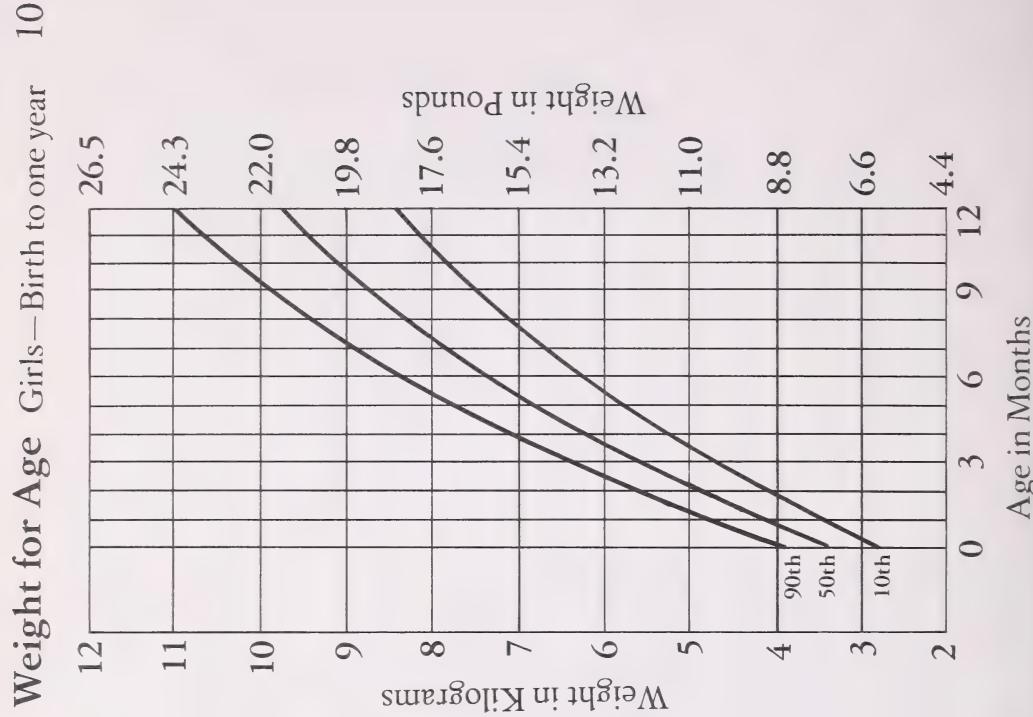
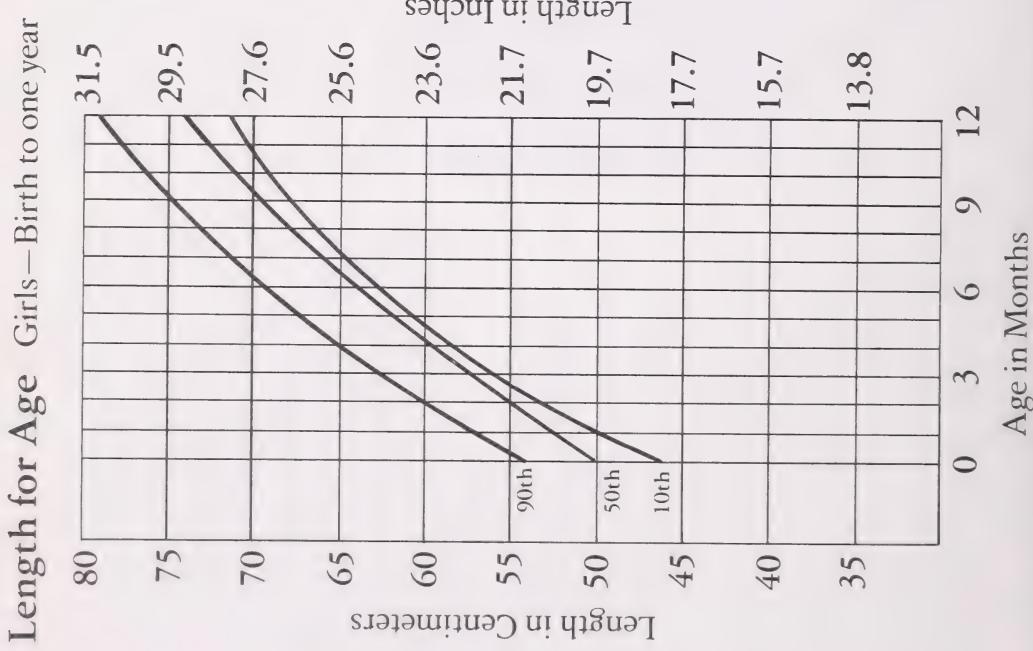
- Remember that germs or bacteria that can cause sickness and diarrhea grow quickly in formula at room temperature.

- It is important that your baby doesn't sleep with a bottle in his or her mouth. The sugar in milk can cause tooth decay when the baby doesn't swallow the milk immediately.
- Offer your baby milk from a cup by 9 months.

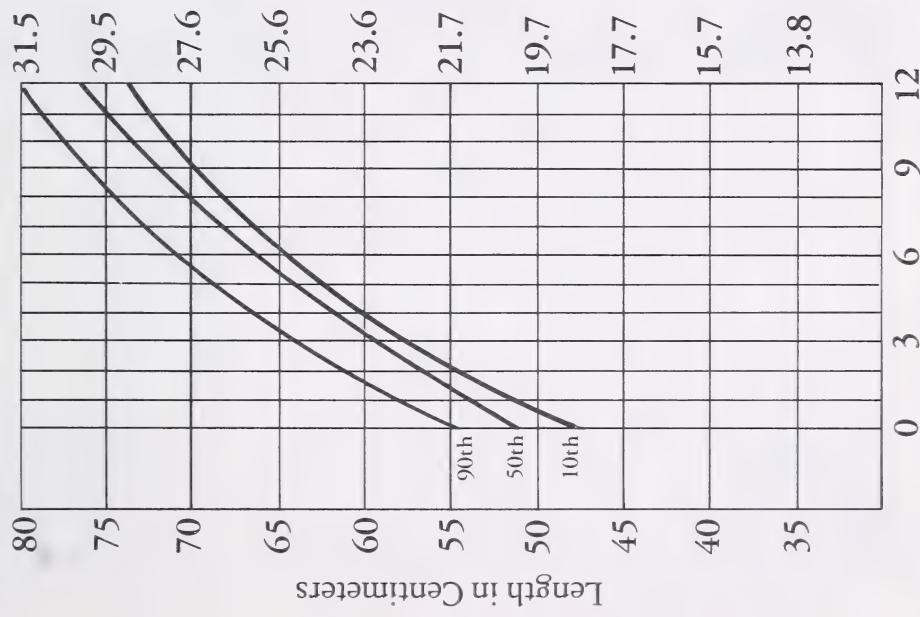
Congratulations it's a \_\_\_!

Use these graphs to follow your baby's growth and development. Each month mark your baby's weight and height. The nurse or nutritionist will show you how to do it. Babies grow at different rates, so do not be concerned if your graph looks different from these. If your baby changes paths discuss it with your doctor, nurse or nutritionist.

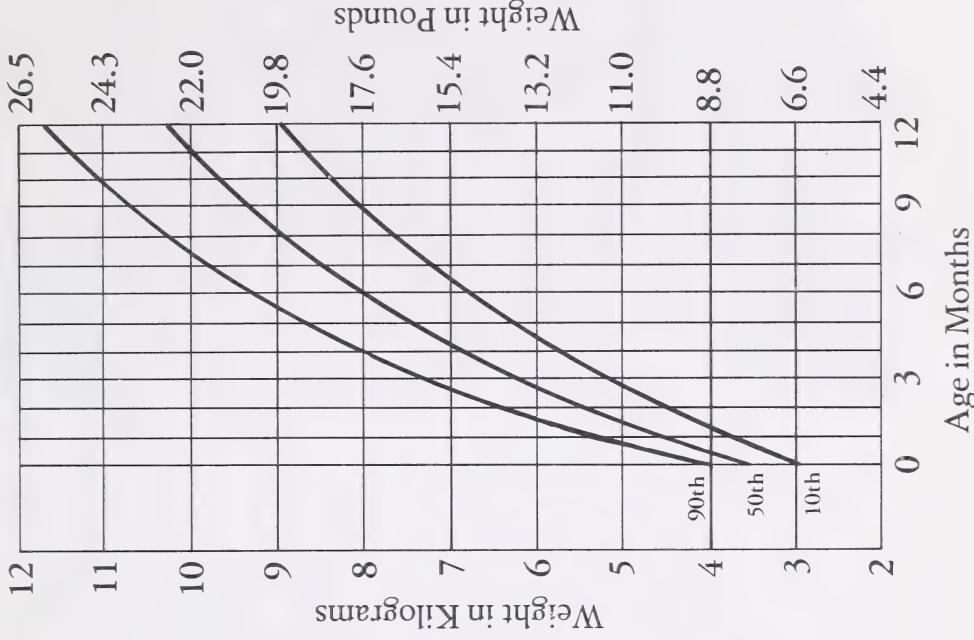




### Length for Age Boys—Birth to one year



### Weight for Age Boys—Birth to one year



### Weight for Age Boys—Birth to one year

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## Your Baby's First 12 Months

12



*Individual needs  
will vary. Use these  
suggested amounts  
as a guide.)*

### Month 1

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula

### Month 2

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula

### Month 3

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula

- breastfeed six to eight times a day or on demand
- if bottle feeding, 2 to 4 ounces, six to seven feedings, at least 14 ounces total

- breastfeed five to six times a day or on demand
- if bottle feeding, 4 to 6 ounces, five to six times a day, at least 23 ounces total



### **Month 4**

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula

Infant cereal if advised by doctor

### **Month 5**

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula

Infant cereal if advised by doctor

### **Month 6**

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula

Infant cereal  
Strained vegetables and strained fruit

Can start strained meat or strained legumes (dried peas and beans)

- breastfeed four to five times a day or on demand
- if bottle feeding, 6 to 8 ounces, four to five times a day, at least 27 ounces total
- if needed, start with 1 teaspoon of cereal
- breastfeed four to five times a day or on demand
- if bottle feeding, 6 to 8 ounces, four to five times a day, at least 30 ounces total
- 2 to 3 tablespoons solids at each of four to five feedings



### Month 7

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula

Infant cereal

Strained vegetables and strained fruit

Strained meat or strained legumes (dried beans and peas)

Dry toast for teething

### Month 8

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula

Infant cereal

Finely chopped vegetables, fruit, meat, poultry, dried beans and peas, cheese  
Juice from a cup  
(peas)

### Month 9

Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula

Infant cereal

Chopped vegetables, fruit, meat, poultry, dried beans and peas, cheese  
Juice from a cup  
Finger foods

- breastfeed four to five times a day or on demand
- if bottle feeding, 6 to 8 ounces, four to five times a day, for a total of 30 to 32 ounces
- 6 to 7 tablespoons of various solids at each of three to four feedings

- breastfeed three to four times a day or on demand
- if bottle feeding, 6 to 8 ounces, three to four times a day, total intake less than 30 ounces
- 6 to 7 tablespoons of various solids at each of three to four feedings

- breastfeed three to four times a day or on demand
- if bottle feeding, 6 to 8 ounces, three to four times a day, total intake less than 30 ounces
- 7 to 10 tablespoons of various solids at each of three to four feedings

Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula	Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula	Breast milk or Iron-fortified formula
Infant cereal	Infant cereal	Infant cereal
Chopped vegetables, fruit, meat, poultry, dried beans and peas, cheese, rice, noodles, macaroni	Chopped table food—vegetables, fruit, meat, poultry, dried beans and peas, cheese, rice, noodles, macaroni	Chopped table food—vegetables, fruits, meats, poultry, dried beans and peas, cheese, rice, noodles, macaroni, eggs
Juice from a cup	Juice from a cup	Juice from a cup
Finger foods	Finger foods	Finger foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breastfeed three to four times a day or on demand</li> <li>• if bottle feeding, three to four times a day, total intake less than 30 ounces</li> <li>• 7 to 10 tablespoons of solids at each of three to four feedings</li> <li>• breastfeed three to four times a day or on demand</li> <li>• if bottle feeding, three to four times a day, total intake less than 30 ounces</li> <li>• 7 to 10 tablespoons of solids at each of three to four feedings</li> </ul>		





After birth, babies must be provided with food and a loving environment. Babies are born with a strong sucking reflex. During the first month, babies learn how to get the milk they need.

- Babies learn that sucking gives milk and that milk satisfies hunger and thirst.
- The closeness between mother and baby when feeding helps to begin strong loving and trusting relationships.



During the second month most babies:

- Recognize mother and learn that she gives food.
- Feed about six to eight times a day and may start to sleep through the night.
- If possible, the father and other members of the family should be encouraged to help with feeding the baby and making the feeding time pleasant.





## Month 3

During the third month most babies:

- Recognize the breast or bottle as a source of food.
- Gain control of head and eyes and stare into mother's or father's face while feeding.
- Respond to mother's or father's voice and show signs of trust.





Between 4 and 6 months babies begin to change in ways that you can notice, growing and developing at their own rates. For the first couple of months babies can only push their tongues forward. At four months, most babies are still not ready for solid food. They may suck food from a spoon, but they stick out their tongues as you remove the spoon.





Babies are ready for solid food when they can move food from a spoon to the back of their mouths and swallow it. During the fifth month most babies are gaining greater control over their bodies. They can now usually sit with support and hold their heads up and steady. This will make it easier when you begin to feed your baby solid foods.





During the sixth month most babies:

- Reach and grasp objects and bring them to their mouths.
- Begin to eat solid foods. Feeding, holding, talking with, and cuddling your baby will help him or her to continue developing trust and love.





## Introducing Solid Foods

At 6 months your baby needs the calories and nutrients in other foods in addition to milk. It is also important for your baby to learn about spoons and cups, and the different tastes and textures of foods. Babies do not need added salt, sugar, or any other seasoning in their food. The food may taste flat to you, but your baby will not think it tastes that way.

Avoid feeding your baby honey, as it could cause serious illness in infants. Feeding your baby solid foods too early can cause allergies. Here are some suggestions for introducing solid foods into your baby's diet:

- You should offer one new food at a time and not mix different foods. This way, if your baby has an allergic reaction you can identify the food that caused it.
- Offer only one new food for 3 or 4 days before you introduce another food.
- If your baby shows an allergic reaction, wait a few months before trying the food again. Allergic reactions are: rash, diarrhea, hives, and vomiting.



## Storing Baby Food

Keep prepared baby food in the refrigerator in a clean container with a tight-fitting lid. *To help prevent the food from spoiling:*

- Feed your baby from a dish rather than from the storage container.
- Don't put the spoon the baby has eaten from into the container, unless you are going to discard the leftovers. The baby's saliva on the spoon carries germs and will cause the food to become thinner.

## Try to use the baby food

as soon after preparation as possible. Use pureed meat within 1 day. Use fruits and vegetables within 2 to 3 days.

The easiest way to store baby food for long periods of time is to freeze it in individual portions. *To do this:*

- Place 1 to 2 tablespoons of food into each compartment of ice cube trays and freeze them. Then put cubes into plastic bags to store them in the freezer. You can safely keep food

## frozen this way for 1 to 2 months.

- To thaw the frozen food, place one or more cubes in a cup or small dish over hot water. Remember: you cannot safely refreeze thawed food.

## Start With Cereals

Infant cereal should be the first solid food that you will feed your baby.

• Begin with an iron-fortified single grain cereal such as rice cereal.

• Give just a teaspoon the first day. The teaspoon of cereal should be mixed with enough formula, milk, or water to make it look like cream soup.

- Gradually increase the amount of cereal, according to your baby's appetite.
- Then add other single grain cereals, such as oats or barley. Heat or mixed

cereals are more likely to cause allergic reactions, so start these after 7 months.

- While younger babies like thin cereal, older babies prefer cereal that is thicker and holds its shape



on a spoon.  
Do not feed your baby cereal in a bottle or "infant feeder." These deny the baby the chance to see and feel the textures of new foods and to become familiar with eating from a spoon.

## Then Add Vegetables

Here are some suggestions for preparing vegetables, when your baby is ready for them:

- Making your own baby foods is easy and may save you money, or you may choose to buy prepared baby vegetables.
- When you first begin to feed vegetables, your baby will probably like them to be smooth and almost liquid in consistency.
- To best preserve the nutrients in vegetables, steam, bake, or boil them in a small amount of water

## until they are just done.

Peel and remove the seeds, if the vegetable has skin or seeds.

- For a fine consistency, rub vegetables through a strainer or puree them in a food mill or blender. Stir in small amounts of cooking water until the vegetables reach the consistency you wish.
- If you prepare home-made vegetables for your infant, avoid spinach, carrots, and beets until he or she is at least 9 months old.



## Fruit And Fruit Juice

Here are some things to keep in mind when you begin serving your baby fruit and fruit juice:

- Start with one fruit at a time to determine if your baby has an allergic reaction.
- Ripe bananas are the easiest fresh fruit to prepare. Just mash them with a fork.

- You may steam or cook fruits that your baby will not eat raw in a small amount of water. Then mash or rub them through a strainer.

- As your child continues to develop, he or she will begin to reach and grasp objects. With your assistance, your baby may be able to drink juice from a cup. You should wait to feed your baby juice until he or she can drink from a cup. Many doctors and dentists recommend feeding juice from a cup instead of a bottle to help prevent tooth decay.



## Protein Foods

Between the 6th and the 10th month you should begin to add sources of protein other than milk to your child's diet. Foods such as beans and meat supply needed nutrients including minerals like iron.

The texture of the food that you feed your child will depend on your baby's readiness. When you first introduce protein foods your child will probably want them to be as smooth as possible. Here are some suggestions:

### Beans

- Cooked dried beans, peas or lentils without salt, fat, or other seasonings. If you have a food mill, put the food through it to separate the skins and mash the beans.

- Unsalted tofu.

### Dairy products

- Mashed cottage cheese.
- Plain unsweetened yogurt.

### Meat, fish, and poultry

- Remove skin and fat and bake, broil, stew, or braise meat, poultry, or fish.
- Look carefully for bones in fish and poultry.

- Grind meat in a meat grinder, baby food mill, or blender, if possible. Or, make sure it is very finely chopped and mashed.

### Finger Foods

Soon your baby will pick up food with his or her fingers and try to eat it. When this happens, try finger foods such as:

- Toasted bread sliced in sticks.
- Cheese cut into bite-sized cubes.
- Orange sections with the membrane and seeds removed.
- Chilled cooked whole carrots.

**Note:** Do not feed your baby small dry foods like peanuts, raisins, or popcorn as they may cause the baby to choke.

### Serving Your Baby Table Foods

By this time your baby has probably tried many different foods and is ready to eat some of the same foods that the rest of your family does.

- When you are preparing food for your family:
- Take out your baby's portion before you add salt, sugar, or other seasonings.
- If you serve canned vegetables or frozen peas, be sure to rinse them before cooking or heating. They are higher in salt than fresh or other frozen

### Vegetables, and rinsing will reduce the amount of salt.

- Use fresh fruits or canned fruits packed in juices, light syrup, or water.
- Try serving your baby table foods such as:

Bite-sized pieces of chicken, hamburger, or fish.

Peanut butter or cheese with bread.

Squash, spinach, or green beans.

Mashed potatoes, bread, spaghetti, or rice.

Bananas, apple slices, or peaches, peeled.

## Good Food Habits

To help your baby to continue developing good eating habits, follow these hints:

- Set a good example. If other people at the table enjoy eating a variety of foods, your baby will learn to do the same by copying what they do.
- Allow your baby plenty of time to eat a meal. Babies eat slowly, so keep mealtime relaxed and calm. An excited baby has trouble eating.

## Offer small servings in cups.

Your baby will let child-sized bowls, plates, or you know if he or she wants more food.

- Most babies will eat when they get hungry. Don't worry if sometimes your baby refuses to eat. He or she may be tired, excited, or not hungry.
- Serve foods that are colorful and have interesting shapes.



During the seventh month most babies:

- Have the first signs of teeth and begin chewing.
- Improve their grasping ability and try to eat food with their fingers. Large finger foods help babies to develop their abilities to grasp objects and to put food in their mouths. Eating foods with their fingers makes eating fun for babies and gives them the feeling of accomplishment.





During the eighth month feeding becomes a social time. Most babies:

- Sit without support and have good head and body control.
- Start exploring different food textures.

With each month your baby will become more and more independent. As this happens, babies try to feed themselves with a spoon and drink by themselves from a cup. Encourage your baby to develop these skills.





During the ninth month most babies:

- Can bite and chew soft table foods.
- Can pick up and move objects, such as food.





During the 10th month most babies:

- Drink fruit or vegetable juice from a cup with help.
- Pick up and eat bite-sized pieces of food with their fingers.
- When full, turn their heads and purse their lips.





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During the 11th month most babies:

- Start spoon feeding themselves, with help.
- May begin to hold a cup by themselves.
- Like the way food feels in their fingers.





During the 12th month most babies:

- Will want to begin eating the same food as their parents.
- Will start to drink from a cup without spilling very much.





## How To Prepare Baby Formula

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- Wash bottles and nipples carefully. This will avoid germs that could make your baby sick.
- Read the directions for measuring infant formula given on the can.
- Once the formula is prepared, refrigerate until ready to use. Remember that germs that can cause sickness and diarrhea grow rapidly in formula at room temperature.

### Preparing A Single Bottle Of Formula

1. To get ready to make your baby's formula, first get all the things you'll need together.

2. Wash your hands with soap and water.

3. Wash a bottle, nipple, cap, and ring in hot, soapy water and rinse them well in hot water. Squeeze water through the nipple hole to be sure it is open.

4. Read the directions for measuring infant formula given on the can.

5. If you use powdered formula, boil water and

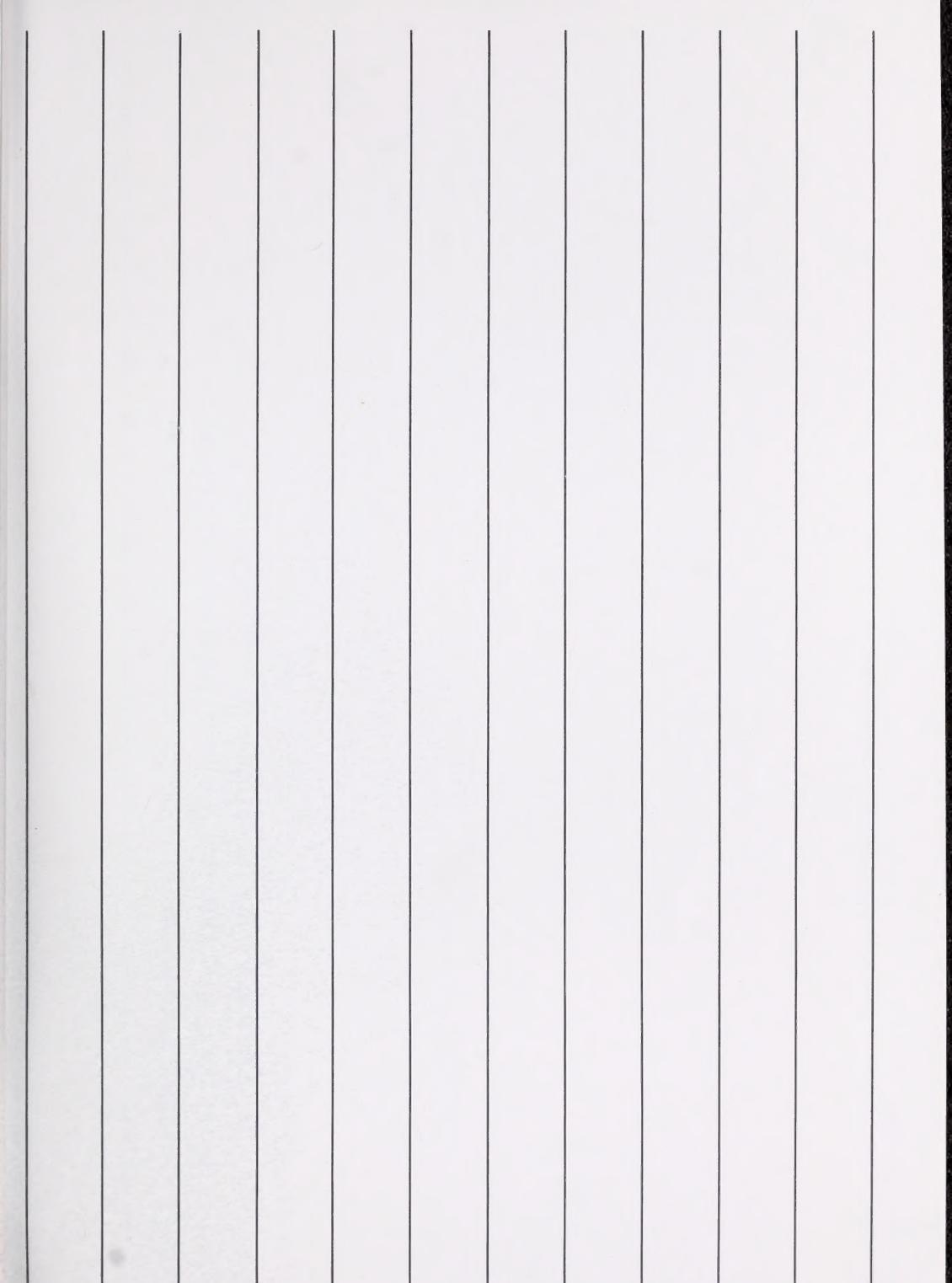
cool it, and pour the right amount of cooled water into the bottle. Add the right number of scoops of powdered formula and let it settle for a minute or two. Then put on a nipple and ring and shake. Or: If you use ready-to-feed formula, wash the top of the can before opening it. Pour the formula into a clean boiled bottle and put on the nipple and ring.

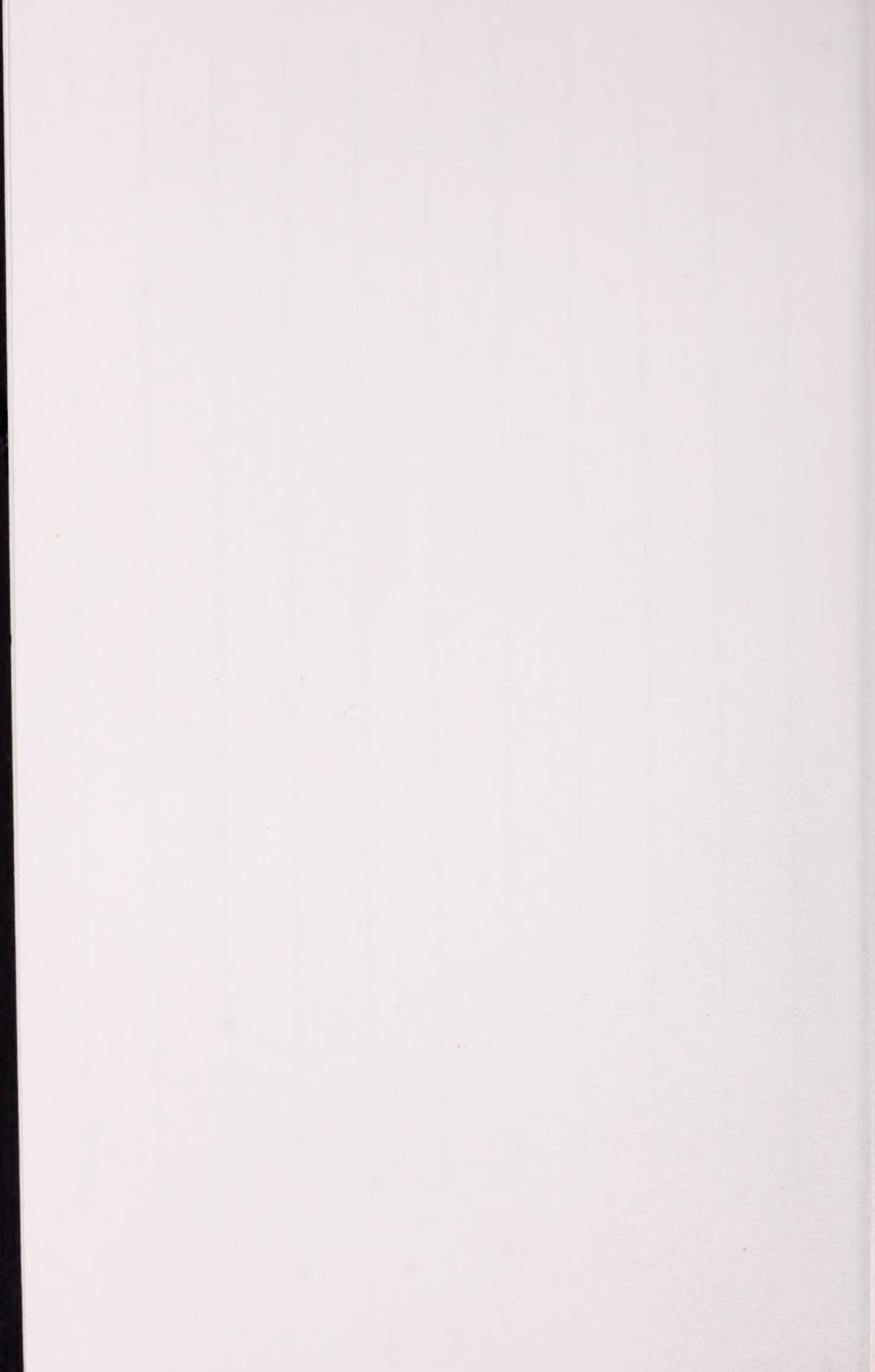
6. Now the formula is ready to feed your baby. If you wish, warm slightly —so a drop on your wrist feels lukewarm.

## Preparing Formula For 1 Day

1. To get ready to make your baby's formula, first get all the things you'll need together.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water.
3. Wash the bottles, nipples, caps, rings, and jar in hot, soapy water.
4. Squeeze the water through the nipple holes to be sure they are open.
5. Wash the top of the formula can before opening it.
6. Follow the directions for measuring the infant formula given on the can.
7. Mix the right amount of powdered or concentrated infant formula with cooled boiled water in a clean jar.
8. Pour the amount of formula for one feeding into each of the clean bottles.
9. Put a clean nipple upside down on each bottle and cover with a cap and screw on the rings, tightly.
10. Put the bottles in the refrigerator until feeding time.

## Notes





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The Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children are open to all eligible people regardless of race, color, or national origin.

United States Department of Agriculture/  
Food and Nutrition Service

Program Aid No. 1281

June 1981